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DE RUEHSO #0642 3381259
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FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8750
INFO RHEFHLC/DHS WASHDC
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 9904
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 8933
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 4248
RUEHPNH/NVC PORTSMOUTH 0064

UNCLAS SAO PAULO 000642

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP, INL/HSTC, WHA/BSC, DS/CR/OCI
DEPT ALSO PASS TO KCC

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED-PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [ASEC](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: FRAUDULENT DOCUMENT RING SHUT DOWN WITH LIGHTNING SPEED

11. (SBU) Summary: On November 13, 2008, a joint Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU)/Assistant Regional Security Officer Investigator (ARSO-I) investigation resulted in the arrest of four members of a fraudulent document ring in Sorocaba, Brazil (Note: Sorocaba is a city of 557,500 located 80 miles to the east of Sao Paulo. End Note.) Police have filed charges against the four for fraud, falsification of public and private documents, formation of an organized crime group, and selling packages of fake supporting documents in furtherance of fraudulently obtaining non-immigrant U.S. visas. If convicted on all charges, they could each face up to five years in prison. The leader of the group is in the United States and will face charges if/when he returns to Brazil. A/RSO-I is coordinating with liaison in the United States to arrange his return. End Summary.

12. (SBU) On October 9, 2008, a consular section officer at the Sao Paulo Consulate General requested FPU assistance in examining the supporting documents of an applicant and his wife. FPU confirmed the documents were fraudulent and that the claimed employer was fictitious. FPU then ran Consular Consolidated Database Text Searches on the information from the two applications, discovering 16 approved and 22 refused associated cases. (Note: Sao Paulo's overall refusal rate is five percent. The refusal of nearly 60 percent of these applicants indicates the overall quality of the documents and/or the fabricated story was poor. End note.) Using the Department of Homeland Security's Arrival-Departure Information System (ADIS) it was determined that all but one of the 16 issued had already traveled to the United States.

13. (SBU) FPU then phoned the one applicant in possession of a valid visa who remained in Brazil. During the conversation, the applicant confessed to having purchased the supporting documents she had presented at her interview - tax documents, pay stubs, bank documents, and fake certification of employment in the government-issued Work Booklet - for approximately USD 750 and identified the vendor. The applicant subsequently went to the Brazilian police in Sorocaba and provided a statement. The case was then passed to the A/RSO-I for further action.

14. (SBU) A/RSO-I meetings with the Civil Police Chief in Sorocaba led to the case being accepted by Sao Paulo State Prosecutors from the Organized Crime Group (GAECO). GAECO obtained judicial authorization for wiretaps which provided sufficient information for the police to issue arrest warrants for the travel agency owner and his associates, as well as authorization to search the Sorocaba-based Universal and Ello travel agencies and a complicit accountant's office. On November 13, Civil Police in Sorocaba simultaneously executed the warrants, searching the offices, seizing computers and other evidence, and arresting four individuals.

15. (SBU) The four individuals arrested are:

ACIRA APARECIDA DE SOUZA, Package vendor
EDSON LUIZ DE LIMA NUNES, Document producer
ALESSANDRA ARRUDA, ELLO owner
ANDREA GONZAGA DOS SANTOS, Document producer

The individual identified as leading the group, Sandro Alex de Oliveira, is currently in the United States, having arrived August 18, 2008 on a B-2 tourist visa. A/RSO-I will work with the appropriate U.S. authorities to locate De Oliveira in the United States and return him to Brazil, at which time Brazilian police intend to arrest him.

¶6. (SBU) A review of the applications and issuance and refusal notes established a general profile for the scheme. The majority of applicants were 25-40 years of age and presented themselves as newly or about-to-be-married, intending to honeymoon in Orlando. The male often claimed to be an owner/manager of a car dealership and the female claimed to be an owner/salesperson in a clothing/jewelry store. They had no prior travel and little beyond a high school education.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: The speed with which this case moved (only a little over a month from discovery to conclusion) is an indication of the strong cooperative relations between the Consulate General and local authorities. FPU and A/RSO-I will continue to investigate the scope of the group's operations as the Brazilian police pass on further client lists seized in the operation. FPU will provide lessons-learned training to adjudicating officers in order to help them better identify potential fraud of this nature. End Comment.

WHITE